

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 3279

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (DIGGS, CHARLES C.) CG
SUBJECT: CODEL DIGGS VISIT TO KINSHASA MARCH 29-30, 1978

REF: KINSHASA 3085; B) KINSHASA A-026; C) BRAZZAVILLE 340

1. SUMMARY: CODEL DIGGS HAD A SHORT BUT PRODUCTIVE VISIT TO KINSHASA MARCH 29 AND 30. THE HIGHLIGHT WAS A PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU (REF A). THE CODEL'S STAY WAS NOTEWORTHY FOR THE SOLICITUDE SHOWN IT BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND IT SERVED TO underscore US IDENTIFICATION WITH A ZAIRIAN INSTITUTION WHICH HAS SOME POTENTIAL TO ACT AS A FORCE FOR POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. END SUMMARY.

2. CONGRESSMAN DIGGS AND THE TWO MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY ARRIVED IN KINSHASA AT 2:00 P.M. ON MARCH 29. THE ZAIRIAN WELCOMING DELEGATION FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS LED BY FIRST VICE PRESIDENT NZONDOMYO AND INCLUDED THE RAPPORTEUR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE (CITOYEN KASHOBA), TWO MEMBERS (CITOYENS PAULUSI AND KYEMBWA) AND AN ECONOMIC COUNSELOR (CITOYENNE GEMA). THIS DELEGATION ACCOMPANIED CODEL DURING MOST OF ITS STAY.

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E. CONGRESSMAN, DIGGS, STAFF DIRECTOR CHALLENGER AND ESCORT OFFICER LANPHER RECEIVED A COUNTRY TEAM BRIEFING AT THE EMBASSY AS ITS FIRST SUBSTANTIVE ITEM OF BUSINESS. (DUE TO THE INTEREST SHOWN BY CODEL, THIS BRIEFING WAS CONTINUED IN TWO ADDITIONAL SESSIONS THE FOLLOWING DAY.)

4. AFTER A COURTESY CALL ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, BOBOLIKO LOBONGA, THE CODEL HAD A WORKING SESSION WITH COUNCIL MEMBERS. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT NZONDOMYO LED THE ZAIRIAN GROUP AND PRESENTED A 14-PAGE PAPER EXPLAINING THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL.

5. AMONG THE GUESTS AT A RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE AMBASSADOR WERE STATE COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS UMBA DI LUTETE, STATE COMMISSIONER FOR NATIONAL ORIENTATION MOKOLO, A NUMBER OF LEGISLATORS AND OTHER ZAIRIAN DIGNITARIES, AFRICAN AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO KINSHASA, MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND KEY MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES.

6. THAT EVENING THERE WAS A RESTRICTED MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU IN WHICH THE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS WERE CONGRESSMAN DIGGS, STAFF DIRECTOR CHALENOR AND AMBASSADOR CUTLER (REF A). AFTERWARDS THE PRESIDENT GAVE A DINNER WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY A FILM ON THE ZAIRIAN NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

7. THE CODEL SPENT MOST OF MARCH 30 IN BRAZZAVILLE (REF C).

8. AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE CONGO, CONGRESSMAN DIGGS GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO THE ZAIRIAN NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY
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(AZAP). THE INTERVIEW AS PUBLISHED IN AZAP'S DAILY BULLETIN EMPHASIZED SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. THE CODEL'S VISIT TO THE LEGISLATURE AND THE DINNER GIVEN IN ITS HONOR BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU WERE COVERED BY KINSHASA'S TWO DAILY NEWSPAPERS ("ELIMA" AND "SALONGO") AND BY TELEVISION.

9. CODEL DEPARTED FOR LAGOS AT 9:00 P.M. MARCH 30.

10. COMMENT: THE ATTENTION GIVEN BY CODEL BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND BY THE ZAIRIAN LEGISLATURE DEMONSTRATED GOZ AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GAINING CONGRESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR ZAIRE. THIS WAS THE FIRST CODEL VISIT WE HAVE HAD SINCE THE NEW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TOOK OFFICE AND BEGAN FULL OPERATIONS. THE POST'S PRESENTATION OF "U.S. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN ZAIRE (REF B) LAYS CONSIDERABLE STRESS ON ESTABLISHING CLOSER CONTACTS WITH THE COUNCIL, A BODY WHICH HAS SOME POTENTIAL TO ACT AS A LIBERALIZING FORCE IN ZAIRE. THE CODEL VISIT WAS USEFUL UNDERSCORING US SUPPORT FOR SUCH LIBERALIZATION AND EXPANDING EMBASSY CONTACTS AMONG THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERS.

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